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THE ADMINISTRATION

"Tattletale Gray"

The Federal Bureau of Investigation likes to present itself to the public as a well-oiled crime-fighting monolith that functions without so much as a ping. If that image was never entirely accurate in J. Edgar Hoover's day, it is even less true now under the bureau's acting director, L. Patrick Gray, 56. More and more the bureau's internecine troubles have been surfacing—mainly because Gray's own agents are privately protesting his policies. The most recent and glaring example: Gray's reshuffling of nine veteran members of his headquarters staff, which, among other things, wiped out the bureau's longstanding Crime Records Division. For years it was an elite outfit that served Hoover as a liaison with Congress and the press.

Gray insists that the men are being given jobs that are every bit as important as their previous ones, and that several of the assignments are promotions. However, at least two of the men chose to resign. Gray claims that he is getting rid of "Hooverites," yet some agents accuse him of retaining the most hated of Hoover's hard-line policies.

Among these policies are the harsh disciplinary measures that agents consider unjust; the persistence of power cliques that virtually run the bureau; the perpetuation of Hoover's notorious "blacklist" of people to be shunned, socially and otherwise, by FBI agents; the maintenance of so-called penal colonies, field offices to which agents in disfavor are banished; and leaking FBI information to embarrass officials Gray considers to be his enemies.

Still, nothing has damaged morale at the bureau as much as one of Gray's own innovations—the publicizing of his disciplinary actions. He terms it "airing the linen," but around the bureau these days the practice has earned him the nickname "Tattletale Gray."

**Intelligence.** Most of those sound like basic housecleaning problems that inevitably crop up when an organization of the size and complexity of the FBI loses the only chief it ever had. But the nagging problem that will not go away is Gray's tie with President Nixon. Whatever Hoover's flaws, no one could accuse him of playing partisan politics; he intended the bureau to be above such doings and made that ideal stick during his reign.

Gray left the Navy in 1960 to join the staff of Vice President Richard Nixon, and served on the Nixon campaign teams in 1960 and 1968. There have been disturbing indications that Gray is not the wholly apolitical administrator that he now claims to be. Back in 1969, when he joined the Health, Education and Welfare Department, he told a meeting of Administration appointees, "Do not retch or quiver when we insist that the preponderant major-

ity of our colleagues—political appointees—be members of our own party." He added: "Loyalty includes an avoidance of criticism of our leaders and of our colleagues. Criticism which is destructive in nature is cancerous—it will destroy us and our entire team."

Gray coached Richard Kleindienst in his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee during the I.T.T. controversy, and last summer, at the request of the White House, made campaign speeches for Nixon. He began his talks in Ohio after a presidential aide told him that the state was "crucially vital to our hopes in November." In September he ordered his agents to collect political intelligence for Nixon, and, within the bureau, defended his actions by simply shrugging: "Wouldn't you do that for the President?" Although the request came from a member of Nix-

PAUL CORNELIUS



FBI's L. PATRICK GRAY  
Apolitical administrator?

on's staff, the White House said later that it was improper to give the assignment to the FBI.

An even pricklier matter is the ongoing Watergate bugging case and the White House anger about news leaks. Several agents complained that Gray's spot inspection of the Washington field office in search of the leaks was actually slowing down the Watergate investigation. Recently Gray transferred three FBI officials who pushed the Watergate investigation into the White House and presidential re-election committee. Two accepted the transfers. The third quit the bureau. Said one Washington agent: "I've been around here a long time, and no one has ever questioned my integrity. Now, because the White House is upset, my integrity has been challenged twice in one week."

Gray did relax Hoover's mandatory weight limits—then turned around and disciplined an agent for disobeying an

order to lose weight. On the other hand, he refused to censure an agent whose son had been involved in a drug scandal or to discipline an agent for delinquent reports on some 72 cases to which he was assigned. Said Gray sensibly: "I might have some overdue reports if I was handling 72 cases." He has also reduced some padded conviction statistics Hoover used to cite to make the bureau look good—although a drunken Indian arrested on a reservation may still end up in the FBI's crime figures.

Thus far, Nixon himself has had nothing but praise for Gray, but it remains to be seen whether the President will permanently give Gray the coveted chair.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Cuban Dilemma

For some months, Cuba's Premier Fidel Castro has been showing nearly as much distaste for Havana-bound hijackers as have American authorities. Last Nov. 10, after three men hijacked a Southern Airways jet and took it on a marathon flight to Cuba (TIME, Nov. 27), Castro ordered them jailed and called for broader measures to put the clamps on aerial piracy. With that, the U.S. and Cuba, through Swiss intermediaries, began negotiations that could lead to a mutual agreement to ensure that hijackers would face harsh punishment for their crime in both countries.

But the negotiations place the U.S. in a dilemma. For as a *quid pro quo* for any agreement, Castro insists on a promise that the U.S. will curb the activities of Cuban exile groups in Florida, which, he charges, have attacked Cuban coastline villages and fishing vessels and helped people escape from Cuba. That means that the U.S., which has always cherished its tradition of giving asylum, now must decide whether to turn back refugees from Cuba.

The American dilemma took on a certain urgency on Dec. 6, when three anti-Castro refugees arrived in Key West. Using a fishing knife and a pistol that would not shoot, the three forced two pro-Castro crewmen on a Cuban fishing boat to take them to Florida. It was clearly a hijacking, whatever the American sympathies in the case. The refugees were arrested, and for the first time since Castro came to power in 1959, anti-Castro Cubans were ordered to return to their native country. The Cubans appealed the deportation order and are now free in Florida on bond.

"If the price of a skyjacking accord with Castro is the deportation of three trusting men, then the price is too great," says one State Department staffer. An Administration official thinks that instead of deportation the three could be then given stiff jail sentences, which would probably satisfy the Castro government even if the jail terms were later shortened or suspended.